



# A Study on Enhancing the Self-esteem of Female Inmates Through Art Activities\*

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## Abstract

Art activities can be used correctly and effectively in association with the concept of enhancing self-esteem. The study was aimed at using art activities to enhance the self-esteem of 20 female inmates in the Central Prison of Khon Kaen Province. Methods were: 10 art activities of 12 sessions and pre-post tests (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale) were given to and conducted on the female inmates. The results were positive: the levels of self-esteem tested showed statistical significance at 0.5, and their satisfaction with the art activities ranged from 4.25 to 4.90, showing that most were highly satisfied. Therefore, art activity can be an effective tool for enhancing self-esteem in female inmates. Future research should be carried out on male inmates for further validation of the use of art activity for self-esteem enhancement.

**Key words:** art activities, self-esteem, female inmates

## Introduction

Self-esteem means the attitude of self-acceptance, self-appreciation and self-pride, especially about self-evaluation on own value, habit, and integrity. (Dictionary of Psychology, The Royal Institute, Royal Institute of Thailand. (1997: p. 359)

Prasert Seelrattana (1999) said that “Humans try to improve their quality of life by developing experiences which generate physical, emotional, social, intellectual and aesthetical value.

Through the experiences of aesthetic and cre-

ative expression, humans can be developed on many psychological concepts such as self-awareness and self-confidence. Beauty awareness and appreciation from art and nature of humans influence them to have positive feeling and good conscient which affect habits and expressions. Good expressions will lead to peaceful cohabitation.

The progress of self-esteem is a continuous process from childhood to adulthood and can be developed by providing activities that children can do by themselves. This will stimulate them to develop self-esteem, confidence, resistance and problem evasion. (Aree Phanmanee, 1999)

Branden (1981) was referred by Waltz (1992)

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that self-esteem is the immunity or relief of severe mental problems that have occurred. Practically, it is found that people usually get torment because they do not have enough self-esteem. Self-esteem needs the balance between ability of personal evaluation or awareness and their imagination of what they would like to be. If both are similar, they will have self-esteem and it can solve problems. On the other hand, if there is a difference between self-awareness and reality and their self-expectation, they will not have self-esteem, be afraid of confusion, be frustrated and lack enthusiasm.

Prison inmates are the group of individuals that have psychosomatic potential more than free persons. They lack the supports for their emotional life, and are under heavy rules and so experienced lots of pressure. Under such conditions they have difficulty in adjusting and living as inmates (Soraluk Prajiad, 2005: 67-68).

The use of art activities or art therapy is suitable for inmates to undergo a psychological rehabilitation in which they can relax and stay focused (Department of Corrections Research Center leaflet).

From the background of self-esteem knowledge and the psychological idea that people who are prisoned from delinquencies usually have a problematic life background or have stumped pressure which probably came from lack of self-esteem for confronting or solving problems. Thus, the researchers would like to test art usage for strengthening self-esteem so when they are acquitted, they might have a better life.

## Objectives

1. To develop art activities for enhancing the self-esteem.
2. To study the self-esteem in female inmates using the art activities.

## Methodology

The study was conducted in July-August 2013, 6 weeks. The activities held 1-2 days per week, 1 hour

per time.

## Population

The study population was 20 voluntary female inmates jailed on drug charges, Central Prison, Konkaen Province: 4 were 18-20 years old (20%) and 16 were 21-30 years old (80%). Marital status: 7 were single (35%), 12 were married (60%) and 1 was divorced (5%).

Level of education: 1 was primary school (5%), 11 were middle school (20%), 4 were high school (20%), 1 was vocational education, and 3 were higher education (15%).

Physical condition: 17 were normal (85%) and 3 were in pregnancy (15%).

## Instruments

1. An art preparation activity plan adapted from many aspects of basic art skill development such as drawing, molding, sculpture, and architecture according to the book *Art Appreciation* (Aree Sutthiphan, 1992) and the book "Art Element" (Tianchai Tangpornprasert, 2012).

2. 10 art activities plan according to the knowledge developed from the information in the thesis of Chanapach Limsuabchua (2010) Pafan Areema (2004) and learning theory of Robert Gagne (2013).

3. Self-esteem assessment: an evaluation of Rosenberg presented by Thapanee Tangjitpakdeekul (2013) in the psychological measurement manual of Sucheera Pattarayutwat (2013) which used the scale for assessment from 1-10, 5 were positive (1, 3, 4, 7, 10) and 5 were negative (2, 5, 6, 8, 9).

## Data Collection

1. The study began with the introduction, familiarization and name check. Then the participants filled in information in the questionnaire and Rosenberg's evaluation and then the researchers explained about the overall image of the art activities.

2. An hour of basic art skills preparation be-

fore the activities begins as follows

2.1 The researchers informed the purpose of the activities, timetable, and operation conditions.

2.2 Brought all equipment and asked the participants which equipment they were skilled at. Then introduced everyone so they could talk to each other.

3. Art Activities: An hour of basic art skills activities prepared by adapting Robert Gagne's theories on learning from easy to difficult tasks (Gagne R., 2013), and ideas from the book "Art Appreciation" of Aree Sutthiphan (1992) and the ideas of "Art Elements" by Tianchai Tangpornprasert (2012) in order to make 10 art activities sessions, the author also reviewed the art therapy theory and practice that mentioned the psychological concept of self esteem in relation to art-making which emphasized expression of thoughts and feelings, especially the visual art creation for the symbolic communication process. Hence, art works will provide sufficient psychological data for therapeutic intervention based on the following ideas;

1. The clients are able to establish their own identities, and able to discover their own awareness.

2. The aesthetic in art would make the clients adjust their emotion, as well as feeling satisfaction on their works, and develop self-awareness.

3. Art-making has the effects on both own body system, its relaxation and happiness.

Overall, the art therapy modality could be adapted and applied to work with any individuals or groups at all ages (Lertsiri Bovornkitti, 2005: 68-69).

The art activities applied to work with the research population are as follows.

**Activity 1** Basic art preparation: the researchers introduced the equipment and let the participants try using the equipment to make a work according to their proficiency and affection.

**Activity 2** Round 1 topic: "flower" easy type

**Activity 3** Round 2 topic: "flower" difficult type

**Activity 4** Round 3 topic: "animal" easy type

**Activity 5** Round 4 topic: "animal" difficult type

**Activity 6** Round 5 topic: "fruits food and surroundings"

**Activity 7** Round 6 topic: "a person"

**Activity 8** Round 7 topic: "view" easy type

**Activity 9** Round 8 topic: "view" difficult type

**Activity 10** Round 9 topic: "myself"

**Activity 11** Round 10 topic: "I want to draw"

4. Used self-esteem questionnaire before and after via the method of Chatsiri Piyapimolsit (13) and found the statistic numbers by T test by setting the level of significance at 0.05.

5. Evaluation of art activities satisfaction by answering 8 questions in evaluation form (14) which were

- a. Knowledge gained from activity participation
- b. Ability to adapt the knowledge
- c. Propriety of the equipment
- d. Propriety of the form and type of the activities
- e. Propriety of learning media in the activities
- f. Propriety of instructors in the activities
- g. Satisfaction in the work
- h. Impression about the activities

The average were divided into 5 levels: 4.50-5.00 means satisfy most, 3.50-4.49 means very satisfy, 2.50-2.49 means average, 1.50-2.49 means low, and 1.00-1.49 means satisfy least.

6. The result of study, comments, and suggestions.

## Results

### Self-esteem Data

Considering about the result of comparison between before and after the art activities of 20 inmates, the figures after the activities were higher than be-

fore the activities (Table 1) statistically significantly (P-value 0.05).

### Satisfaction Data

From the analysis result, the satisfaction varied from 4.25-4.90. Most chose satisfy most. Considering about topics, it was found that the topic 3 (propriety of equipment) gained the highest score.

### Discussion and Conclusions

The achievement of the study could be seen obviously from the study result which showed that after participating in the art activities, the study population had more aesthetical awareness than before participating in the activities, had more self-pride, were happy, and relieved stress after joining the art activities. This was because

1. An art preparation activity plan before beginning the activities adapted from the book "Art Appreciation" of Aree Sutthiphan (1992) and the book "Art Elements" of TianchaiTangpornprasert (2012).
2. The learning process of Robert Gagne (2013)

that was adapted was easy and did not need complicated thinking. The activities therefore went smoothly.

3. During the activities, the researchers talked and exchanged opinions with the participants. Also the researchers praised and added positive thinking according to Khera (1998). This created self-pride in the participants. There were happy and satisfied at themselves and thought that their life was meaningful as Connie (2001) gave a lot of importance to.

In conclusion, providing art activities to this group of inmates was successful. This developed self-esteem in female inmates who joined the activities which will have continuous effects after they are acquitted. They could have more efficient life than before.

This study is therefore according to the saying of Channarong Pornrungrroj (Channarong Pornrungrroj, 2001). that art is the big aesthetics that creates beauty, purity, and provides positive thinking and self-esteem. It will let people find their real self and will surprisingly affects their lifestyle.

**Table 1** Result of self-esteem before and after the activities

Test	Average	Standard deviation	df	t
Before the activities	27.14	1.86	19	4.77*
After the activities	30.05	2.98		

\*P-value .05

**Table 2** Analysis of satisfaction of 20 inmates

Topic	Average	Standard deviation	Satisfaction value
1 Knowledge gained from activity participation	4.25	0.72	Very satisfy
2. Ability to adapt the knowledge	4.55	0.60	Satisfy most
3. Propriety of the equipment	4.90	0.31	Satisfy most
4. Propriety of the form and type of the activities	4.40	0.75	Very satisfy
5. Propriety of learning media in the activities	4.40	0.82	Very satisfy
6. Propriety of instructors in the activities	4.80	0.52	Satisfy most
7. Satisfaction in the work	4.30	0.66	Very satisfy
8. Impression about the activities	4.80	0.41	Satisfy most
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.55</b>	<b>0.60</b>	



*Figure 1 and 2* Female Inmates while engaging the visual art process.

## Recommendations

This kind of art activities might be the basic of part-time jobs. When inmates are acquitted, they will use experiences from art activities in their jobs. Also these art activities should be tried out for developing self-esteem in male inmates in the future.

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